September 2001

Panorama

Vol. 1, Issue 2

● A new voice for Concordia University's Faculty of Arts and Science ●

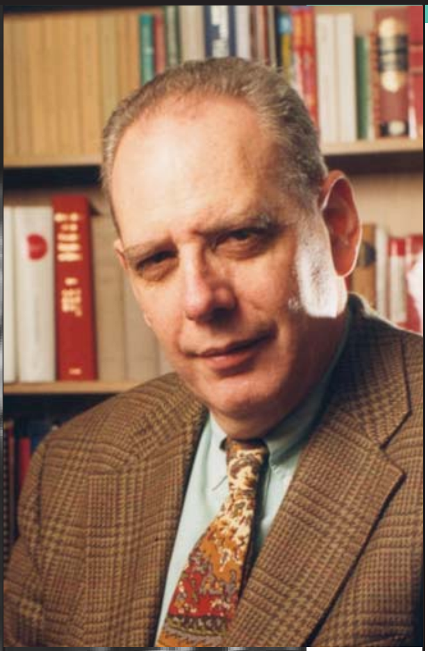
Breaking new ground

Concordia's science revolution begins

In this issue

2 A message from the Dean
6 Professor portrait
7 It adds up to perfect
8 Learning Centre opens
10 Space cadets
11 Giving back to Concordia

a message from the dean



A busy summer on campus

University campuses tend to be tranquil places in the summer. After nine months of noise and bustle, our buildings and surrounding grounds usually quiet down at the end of May.

But this year has been different at the Faculty of Arts and Science, where the Summer of 2001 may go down as one of Concordia University's busiest – and certainly noisiest – summers in recent history. With excavation work beginning on the new Loyola Science Complex, we have been subjected to a chorus of heavy machinery driving piles deep into the ground, while bulldozers claw away the asphalt surface of one of our parking lots.

Of course, these minor inconveniences will all be worth it in a couple of years, when the state-of-the-art Science Complex opens its doors. I am confident that this facility will revolutionize the teaching and research of science at Concordia and rejuvenate our Loyola Campus. (You can read more about this exciting project in this issue of *Panorama*).

Not only will the construction of the Science Complex provide a new home for our science departments, but it will free up much-needed space elsewhere on our two campuses and will ultimately allow us to move many of our Social Science and Humanities departments into larger and upgraded facilities.

Of course, the Science Complex has been just one source of "noise" during the Faculty's busy summer. At the end of May, we inaugurated the new Arts and Science Learning Centre on our downtown Sir George Williams Campus – the latest addition to our growing pool of academic technology facilities. And for the fourth straight year, we spent a good part of the summer welcoming a new group of tenure-track professors to the Faculty. More than 30 new professors have joined the Faculty this year, bringing to 105 the number of professors we have hired since 1997.

Yes, it has been a busy summer here at Concordia – and a sign that things are progressing quickly in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Martin Singer

Martin Singer, Dean
Faculty of Arts & Science

P.S: I welcome comments from everyone, particularly our alumni. Wherever you are in the world, drop me a line at msinger@vax2.concordia.ca and I'll keep you up to speed with what is happening here.

Cover photo by Andrew Dobrowolskyj: Demolishing part of the Bryan Building to make way for the Loyola Science Complex (see stories, pages 3 to 5)

Breaking new ground

Work begins on the $85-million Loyola Science Complex

Andrew Dobrowolskyj

Science labs: need room to grow

The shelves in Justin Powlowski's biochemistry laboratory are cluttered with glass beakers and instruments. Graduate students step gingerly between rickety cabinets as they move to and from their desks, which are lined up against a cramped wall. In one corner, an old fridge doubles as a cold room, storing bacteria samples and other materials that must be kept at refrigerated temperatures.

In an ideal world, the laboratory would offer enough space to store everything in a convenient, orderly fashion. Graduate students and postdoctoral researchers would be able to record the results of their experiments in offices, away from the clutter of the lab. And ideally, the old fridge would be nothing but a fond memory, replaced by cold rooms large enough to store an entire department's supply of materials.

Construction of the ideal world began this summer, when Concordia University broke ground on an $85-million Science Complex on its Loyola Campus – a project that students and professors say will revolutionize research and the teaching of science in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

“It's going to have an incredible impact,” says Marcus Lawrence, Chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, which is now scattered across the upper floors of Concordia's Henry F. Hall Building.

Most of Concordia's science departments and research centers are currently divided among two facilities -- the downtown Hall Building, which opened in 1965, and Loyola's aging Drummond Science Building, which was built in 1961. The new Science Complex, set to be fully operational by September of 2003, will house the Departments of Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Exercise Science, Physics and a major component of Psychology, as well as Science College, the Centre for Structural and Functional Genomics, the Center for Studies in Behavioural Neurobiology and several smaller research centers and support facilities.

Rising five stories above ground with two basement levels, the complex will cover 33,000 square meters, roughly half the size of the Hall Building.

But most importantly, the complex will usher in a new era for sciences at the University, with spacious corridors, plenty of offices and modern laboratories designed and equipped to meet the needs of science instruction and research in the 21st century, says Robert Roy, vice-dean of planning for the Faculty of Arts and Science.

“When our current science buildings were built more than 35 years ago, they were designed with a heavy orientation towards teaching and only a minor orientation towards research, and the balance at Concordia has basically reversed since then,” said Roy, who joined the Department of Biology as an Assistant Professor in 1970. “The general trend in science teaching has been to move from what tended to be descriptive study to

(see *Breaking new ground*, page 12)

> “The general trend in science teaching has been to move from what tended to be descriptive study to more emphasis on experimental work, which requires specialized facilities and increasingly sophisticated equipment.”

Breaking new ground

A new home for science...

Andrew Dobrowolskyj

More than 250 people braved the heat and humidity of a June morning to join members of Concordia University's Board of Governors and senior administration in the official sod-turning ceremony to mark the start of construction of the Loyola Science Complex. Left, a three-dimensional model of the Science Complex is examined by Jonathan Wener, President of the Real Estate Committee of Concordia University's Board of Governors; Frederick Lowy, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Concordia University; Martin Singer, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science; Michael Di Grappa, Concordia's Vice-Rector, Services; Richard Renaud, Co-Chair of the Arts & Science Faculty Building Fund; Garry Milton, Executive Director of the Rector's Cabinet and Robert Roy, Vice-Dean of Planning for the Faculty of Arts and Science. Right, shovels in hand, are Tom Brzustowski, President of the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council; Jeremy Searle, Loyola City Councilor; Wener, Renaud, Jean Fortier, President of the City of Montreal's Executive Committee; Russell Copeman, Member of the National Assembly for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce; Lillian Vineberg, Chair of Concordia University's Board of Governors; Eric Molson, Chancellor of Concordia University; Francesco Bellini, Co-Chair of the Arts & Science Faculty Building Fund; Lowy and Singer.

Andrew Dobrowolskyj

Loyola Campus: A storied history

The construction of the Loyola Science Complex is the latest addition to the former Decary farm, which has been home to Loyola College since 1913 and Concordia University since 1974. Here is a brief recap of some of the campus's major highlights:

January 5, 1900 - The Decary farm, on which Loyola was later built, is purchased by the Jesuit community.

1913 - Construction begins at Loyola. The first students arrive in 1915, but the initial phase of construction is finished only in 1916 with the erection of the Refectory Building, the Psychology Building (the old High School, or Junior Building) and the beginnings of the Administration Building (two storeys in the center and one storey in each wing). Subsequent storeys are added as funding becomes available.

1927 - Work on the main Administration Building is completed with the addition of the top two storeys and the main tower.

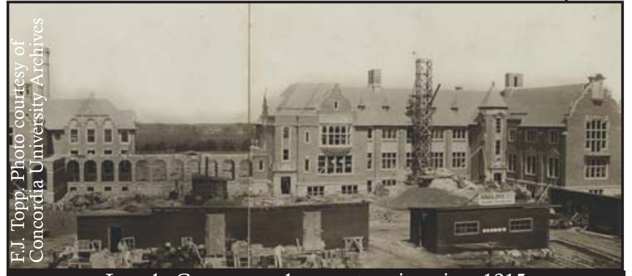
1933 - The Loyola Chapel opens adjacent to the Administration Building. Original plans called for the chapel to be built behind the Administration Building, but Thomas McMahon, the Rector at the time, decides that the chapel would have a higher profile if it faced Sherbrooke St.

1947 - The Central Building is completed, housing classrooms, a library, a gymnasium and student bedrooms.

1961-1973 -- Twelve years of steady construction include the opening of the Drummond Science Building in 1961, Hingston Hall and the Vanier Library in 1964, the Athletic Complex in 1967 and the Bryan Building in 1968. A major expansion project doubles the library's shelf capacity in 1989.

1990 - The Concert Hall opens on the east end of the Campus, providing the area's first modern concert venue. In 1999, it is named in honour of jazz great Oscar Peterson.

April 18, 2001 - Concordia University's Board of Governors approves construction of an $85-million Science Complex. The building is expected to open in September, 2003.



F.J. Topp, Photo courtesy of Concordia University Archives

Loyola Campus under construction circa 1915

Andrew Dobrowolskyj

Loyola Science Complex under construction, 2001

... and a new home for Communication Studies and Journalism

The construction of the new Loyola Science Complex is also great news for students and professors in the Departments of Communication Studies and Journalism, who are expected to move into modern and more spacious facilities in time for the 2004-05 academic year.

Once the occupants of the existing Drummond Science Building have been relocated to the new Science Complex, work will begin on a redesign of the Drummond building. The project is expected to cost about $9 million.

"Other than remaining a rectangular box, [Drummond Science] won't look anything like it does now," says Marty Allor, Chair of the Department of Communication Studies.

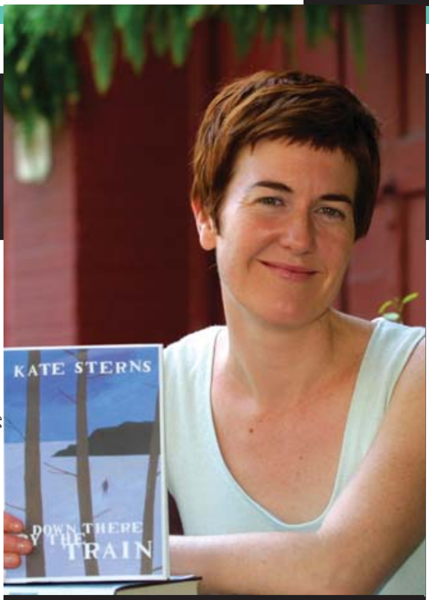
More than anything, the move to a new building will answer a desperate need for more space at the two departments, which have been bursting at their seams the last few years. When the departments' current home, the Bryan Building, was opened in 1968, Loyola College housed just a small Communications Arts department, heavily oriented towards theoretical instruction. Today, Communication Studies welcomes 165 undergraduate and 60 graduate students a year, while Journalism accepts 105 students a year – 80 into its three-year undergraduate program and 25 into its 12-month graduate diploma program.

The renovated Drummond building will offer about double the surface space currently available at the Bryan Building and will include three television studios (including a small one for Journalism), three sound studios, two large multimedia labs and four video editing suites. The studios will offer significant improvements in lighting, ventilation and sound insulation, Allor says.

The redesigned building will also favour the expansion of graduate programs, as designs call for the creation of offices for graduate students as well as a common research area.

"Right now, I don't think that we are able to increase enrolments at all, but with the move to bigger facilities, we will at least be able to think in terms of expansion," says Mike Gasher, an Assistant Professor in Journalism.

The building will also be outfitted with the latest in editing and production equipment, and every office, studio and classroom will be linked with fiber optic cables. Instead of carting videos to class, for instance, students and professors will be able to digitize their work and class materials and access them from any computer terminal in the building, including "smart boards", or electronic chalkboards, which will be installed in many of the classrooms.


KATE STERNS
DOWN THERE BY THE TRAIN

Andrew Dobrowolskyj

Sterns: the write stuff

The plot thickens

Faculty appointment the latest chapter in novelist's life

So far, Kate Sterns's life has read like a storybook. Maybe not the kind of story that would come out of Sterns's own vivid imagination, where released convicts are wont to team up with deranged bakers to rob graves.

No, Sterns's personal story is somewhat more ordinary. It opens in Kingston, Ont., where a surgeon from Czechoslovakia and his wife, a French teacher, instilled in their daughter an early but intense passion for reading and learning.

"My father, like a lot of immigrants of his generation, was very precise about language, and my mother introduced me to books at a very young age," said Sterns, an actively publishing novelist who is the most recent faculty member to join Concordia University's Creative Writing program.

Yet like all good stories, Sterns's did not follow a straight trajectory. After graduating from Queen's University with a degree in English Literature, she spent 11 years in England, where she studied stage management, read scripts for Britain's National Theatre and wrote radio dramas for the British Broadcasting Corporation. But her most fulfilling gig may have been the 18 months she spent as a nanny, for it afforded her the time she needed to polish off her first novel, *Thinking About Magritte*, which was published in 1992.

Sterns eventually decided to pursue a career in teaching, so she completed two graduate degrees in the United States and spent one year teaching at a small college in Michigan. She joined Concordia last fall as an Assistant Professor, just as she was putting the final touches on her second novel, *Down There by the Train*. The work of fiction, which follows the adventures of an ex-convict, has been published to critical acclaim in Great Britain and Canada – rising as high as number eight on Montreal's best-seller list. A U.S. release is planned for next year.

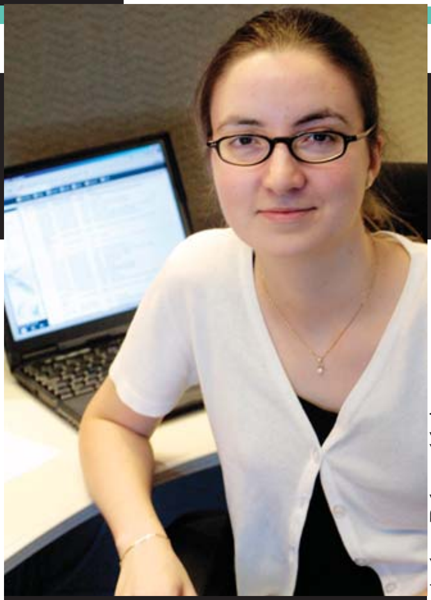
Terry Byrnes, Chair of Concordia's Department of English, says Sterns is typical of the sort of professors that the Faculty of Arts and Science recruits for its highly-esteemed Creative Writing program. By having courses taught by active poets, playwrights and fiction writers, "students learn not only about the technical aspects of writing, but also about the experience of publishing in a commercial environment," he said, pointing out that the University's Creative Writing graduates have laid claim at one time or another to just about every major Canadian literary award.

Yet Sterns, who teaches undergraduate courses and a graduate workshop in writing, says she prefers to downplay her own literary achievements in the classroom. "The best teachers that my students will ever have are the great authors of world literature. They'll do far better reading their works than listening to me." Ⓟ

> "My father, like a lot of immigrants of his generation, was very precise about language, and my mother introduced me to books at a very young age."

It adds up to perfect

Actuarial math student graduates with straight A-pluses



Andrew Dobrowolskyj

Boucher: formula for success

You don't have to be a math whiz to figure out that getting an A-plus in all 30 of your courses will get you a perfect grade point average. But it certainly helps if you plan on accomplishing the feat.

Just ask Marie-Andrée Boucher, who completed her 90-credit degree in Actuarial Mathematics with a perfect grade point average of 4.3. It is only the second time in Concordia's history that a student has accomplished that feat.

What makes the accomplishment even more incredible is the fact that Boucher studied entirely in French until arriving at university. A graduate of Montreal's CEGEP Maisonneuve, Boucher says she chose Concordia in part because it was one of only two Quebec universities to offer a co-operative program in actuarial mathematics, but also because she wanted to improve her English-language skills.

"It was my first time studying in English, so I didn't know what to expect," she says. "I didn't know any of the math terminology in English, so it was rough at first."

Obviously not too rough, since Boucher scored an A-plus in every one of her math courses, as well as in courses in Economics, Finance, Computer Science and even Introductory Spanish.

"I was just trying to do my best," she says humbly.

But while she is obviously blessed with a natural talent for math, part of Boucher's success has to be attributed to her hard work and dedication, says José Garrido, Director of Concordia's Actuarial Mathematics program.

"Everything she does, she does really well," says Garrido. "She didn't walk into a single exam without being sure that she was completely prepared."

Since graduation, Boucher, 22, has landed a job as a consultant with Ernst and Young. She is also two-thirds of the way towards completing a set of nine grueling exams in order to gain membership in the Canadian Institute of Actuaries. Each exam requires between 300 and 500 hours of study, she says, and the pass rates are about 30 per cent.

"You would think that university exams are hard," she says, "but they're nothing compared to actuarial exams."

> "Everything she does, she does really well. She didn't walk into a single exam without being sure that she was completely prepared."

Saluting our top students

Once again this year, the Faculty of Arts and Science will hand out $250 prizes to its top undergraduate scholars. The prizes, based on academic merit, will be awarded on Thursday, September 13, at a ceremony at the Oscar Peterson Concert Hall.

The Scholars' Awards event is one of several recent initiatives launched by the Faculty of Arts and Science in an effort to recognize the outstanding achievements of its top students. The Faculty once again plans to publish its complete 2000-01 Dean's List in the fall. Members of the Dean's List are also eligible to apply for Undergraduate Research Awards.

Learning Centre opens

The Faculty of Arts and Science officially opened the new Arts and Science Learning Centre on May 31. Located on the fourth floor of the downtown Henry F. Hall Building, the center includes three high-tech suites, each of which is equipped with the latest in computer technology. The centerpiece is the **Multimedia Language Studio**, a 40-seat language laboratory that uses the latest in voice technologies to revolutionize language instruction. The centre's **Interactive Teaching Studio** features a multi-media classroom equipped with a "smart board" and video-conferencing capabilities, while the **Distance Learning Studio** includes 33 computers with Internet access, which will enable students to conduct on-line research and complete class assignments in Web-based courses.

Inaugurating the Learning Centre at the ceremonial ribbon-cutting were (left to right): Patsy Lightbown, Director of the Centre for Teaching English as a Second Language; Andrew McAusland, Director of the Faculty's Academic Technology unit; Catherine Vallejo, Chair of the Department of Classics, Modern Languages and Linguistics, Lucie Lequin, Chair of the Département d'Études françaises; Jack Lightstone, Concordia's Provost and Vice-Rector, Research; Martin Singer, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science; Patrick Devey, Director of the Learning Centre; and Michael Di Grappa, Concordia's Vice-Rector, Services.

Grant to improve literacy program

Concordia University's Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (CSLP) has received a $3 million grant via the U.S. federal government to develop technological tools for Success for All, one of North America's most acclaimed and widely-used literacy programs. The Success for All Program was developed in 1987 by researchers at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. It is now in use in more than 2,000 elementary schools, mostly in high-poverty areas. The CSLP will attempt to integrate video and web-based technologies into the program in order to further improve its level of success and cut deeper into school dropout rates. In photo, (from left) are: Dr. Robert Slavin, chair of the Success For All (SFA) Foundation; Dr. Bette Chambers, the SFA's director of Early Learning Programs, and Dr. Phil Abrami, Director of the CSLP.

Snapshots

Congratulations to the eight faculty members in the Faculty of Arts and Science who have been promoted to Full Professor. They are: **Lois Baron** (Education), **Chantal Collard** (Sociology and Anthropology), **David Howes** (Sociology and Anthropology), **Diane Poulin-Dubois** (Psychology), **Richard Schmid** (Education), **Martin Singer** (History), **Barbara Woodside** (Psychology), and **Dominique Legros** (Sociology and Anthropology).

Peter Shizgal (Psychology) was featured extensively in several media reports for his groundbreaking research detailing which parts of the human brain respond to the anticipation of monetary gains and losses. Shizgal, Director of Concordia's Centre for the Study of Behavioural Neurobiology, conducted the research with colleagues from Massachusetts General Hospital and Princeton University. The results were published in the science journal *Neuron.*

Esteban Flores, a doctoral student in Actuarial Mathematics, has been awarded a PhD scholarship from the Casualty Actuarial Society and the Society of Actuaries. He is the first Concordia student to win the prize, valued at $10,000 US. Competition for the annual award is fierce, with only four or five students chosen each year from across North America.

Enn Raudsepp (Journalism) spent part of his summer in Cambodia, teaching a course on political reporting to working journalists in the strife-torn Asian country. The development of a free media is particularly important in Cambodia, he says, where governments have traditionally co-opted the media for partisan and propaganda purposes.

Daya Dayanandan (Biology) traveled to Bangalore, India in July to participate in an international symposium looking into tropical ecosystems, organized by the Association for Tropical Biology. Dayanandan, whose research focuses on the causes and consequences of deforestation, was able to participate in the conference through an International Opportunities grant awarded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

Congratulations to Concordia graduate **Cecilia Flores** (Psychology), winner of the Montreal Board of Trade's Prix d'Excellence de l'Académie des Grands Montréalais in the category of best doctoral thesis in the natural sciences and engineering category. Flores, who came to Concordia from Mexico in 1990, focused her research on the long-lasting consequences of drug abuse in adult rats. She completed her PhD under the tutelage of Concordia professor **Jane Stewart** and spent the past year as a researcher at Harvard Medical School.

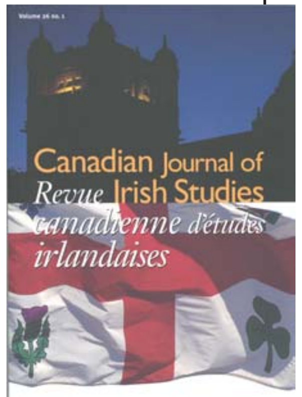
Graduation for more than 1,600

For the second straight year, Montreal's Molson Centre played host to Concordia University's graduation ceremonies in June. A total of 1,615 students graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Science, including 1,371 with Bachelor's or Baccalaureate degrees, 131 with Master's or Magesteriate degrees and 17 with Doctorate degrees. Forty-eight students graduated with undergraduate certificates and 48 completed graduate diplomas.

The Faculty bestowed Honourary Degrees on two recipients - **The Honourable Louise Arbour** (bottom photo, on the left), current Supreme Court Justice and former chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and **Dr. Geoffrey Ballard** (top photo, on the left), a leader in the development of fuel cell technology, which has led the auto industry on a course towards manufacturing environmentally-clean vehicles.

The Faculty of Arts and Science bestows honourary degrees on individuals who have made outstanding contributions to society and who best exemplify the qualities of a role model.

Journal's arrival marks new departure


Canadian Journal of Irish Studies
Revue canadienne d'études irlandaises

Concordia University's newly-established Centre for Canadian Irish Studies is now home to the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, the academic journal's fourth home in its 26-year history. The bi-annual journal had focused primarily on Irish literature, but new editor Michael Kenneally, interim director of Concordia's Centre for Canadian Irish Studies, says the journal has now adopted a broader focus under his tenure. The most recent edition, published in June, touches on a variety of subjects, from Irish history and economics to Irish music and film. The expanded and newly-designed journal includes a photo essay of Irish Montreal and an interview with Irish actor Stephen Rea, star of *The Crying Game.* Concordia's Centre for Canadian Irish Studies was created in 2000, thanks in large part to the financial support of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation. The Faculty of Arts and Science currently offers more than 25 Irish-themed courses, including an interdisciplinary cluster on Irish Studies.